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# Speeches Honoring Abraham Lincoln

James I. Robertson, Jr.

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# ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND JEFFERSON DAVIS: TRAGIC PRESIDENTS

by James I. Robertson, Jr.

The second year of the Civil War was coming to a close when one of the opposing presidents told his Congress: "Fellow-citizens, we cannot escape history. We . . . will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance, or insignificance, can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass, will light us down, in honor or dishonor to the latest generation."

Of course, Abraham Lincoln was not referring merely to Jefferson Davis and himself; but he well could have been in light of a century of historical judgment. Few men afford a better or more fascinating case for comparison than those two.

They were strangers, very unlike each other, and yet there was an odd linkage between them. Lincoln and Davis were born 8 months apart and within 100 miles of one another. Each read alot, thought deeply, and became a skilled public speaker. One

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